

it was only then that Conrad could assure Manuel that he would, after the Diet should meet at Merseburg in May, act with him against the kings of Sicily and France.¹ A Greek envoy, Michael Bardalia, was at his court early in 1150; Rainulf of Avellino's brother, Alexander, at Venice, and other envoys at Pisa, sought, in the interests of the Basileus, to bring those cities into a new coalition, in which the Norman exiles would recover their heritage. Meanwhile, Eugenius, indignant at the crowning of Prince William in Palermo, and with the indefatigable Wibald of Corvei acting as intermediary, urged the King of the Romans to cross the Alps, and avenge him on Roger and the Roman Senate. In March, 1151, the Basileus was ready, in June, Conrad proclaimed his imminent descent upon Italy.

Again, as in 1135, Roger stood isolated. Louis, left without his right-hand man by the death of the Abbot Suger, renounced foreign affairs, and the King of Sicily was left without a single effective ally.

He was saved, as by a miracle, by the death of Conrad (15th February, 1152). The new King, Frederick I., was not elected till March 5th. His great gifts, his excessive pride in his

high office,
his vigour of character were to make
him a more
dangerous foe to the kingdom of
Sicily than his

¹ In April, 1150, Conrad informed Manuel that
the Sicilian
"tyrant" was at the bottom of a joint conspiracy
of France and
Italy against the Eastern Empire. *B. R. Germ.*,
Jaffe¹, i., p. 363.